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RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 8950
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 2216
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3021
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 2230
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0106
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 2969
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 9854
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0329
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 6932
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 4342
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 9242
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 3427
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 5362
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 6929
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 001549

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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XOXO
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[11. Mideast](#)

[12. Syrian Option](#)

Key stories in the media:

Ha'aretz cited both Israeli and American officials as saying that

neither Jerusalem nor Washington has changed its views on talks with Syria. This reaction came in response to recent media reports claiming that both sides changed their minds and now favor such talks. The American diplomatic source said Thursday that the United States had never vetoed Israeli-Syrian talks; it merely asked that Israel not surprise it. The Jerusalem Post cited one senior government official as supporting a secret channel with Syria in order to check the possibility of holding peace negotiations.

All media reported that Palestinian militants continued firing Qassam rockets towards Israel Thursday and Friday. Fifteen Qassam rockets hit Israel on Thursday and five more were fired Friday morning; no injuries or damage were reported. The media reported that the Israeli Air Force bombed eight targets in the Gaza Strip during the night, one of them near Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh's home.

Maariv quoted criticism by several IDF officers that the arrest of 33 senior Hamas members on Thursday was unnecessary and that it might lead to international criticism of Israel instead of Hamas.

Leading media cited Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as saying that if Israel dares to attack Lebanon as it did last summer, the countries of the region will root out Israel's Zionist regime.

All media reported that the ultimatum for Iran to cease its nuclear program expired on Thursday. The media quoted US President George Bush as saying that the US and its allies will act to prepare a new sanction draft against Iran.

Ha'aretz reported that Palestinian UN observer Riyad Mansour has called upon the UN Security Council to demand an immediate cease-fire in Gaza and consider sending international observers to monitor it.

Israel Radio reported that the US Congress has authorized an additional 100 billion dollars for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Ha'aretz published an interview with former United States Defense Secretary William Perry in which he said it would be a mistake for

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Israel to attack Iran.

POLLS:

Yediot presented the results of a Mina Zemach (Dahaf Institute) poll conducted among 600 Labor Party members in advance of party primary elections, which are scheduled for Monday. The numbers in parentheses represent last week's poll.

First round: Ayalon-35% (32%), Barak-31% (34%), Peretz-20% (14%), Pines-9% (11%), Yatom-2% (5%)

Second round: Ayalon-49% (47%), Barak-39% (43%)

Ha'aretz published the results of a poll conducted on Thursday with the Dialog Institute and directed by Prof. Camil Fuchs of Tel Aviv University among Labor Party voters about the primary elections to be held on Monday.

Ayalon-34%, Barak-30%, Peretz-17%, Pines-8%, Yatom-2%, undecided-9%.

11. Mideast:

Summary:

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Israel has no choice but to continue to seek agreements with the Palestinians, but it also must insist on maintaining broader margins of security.... For this reason, most of the security-related sections (the acid tests) in the proposal by the American general Keith Dayton must be rejected."

Block Quotes:

"An Important Lesson"

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (05/25): "In this latest round of violence [intra Palestinian violence], the warring parties have already decided on a cease-fire five times. Each time, within hours, they were back to killing each other and injuring bystanders in the process. If this is how they behave among themselves, why should they be any more scrupulous in abiding by agreements with outside elements such as Israel, Jordan, Lebanon or Egypt? This is an important lesson that Israel must learn from the recent events in Gaza.... Israel has no choice but to continue to seek agreements with the Palestinians, but it also must insist on maintaining broader margins of security.... For this reason, most of the security-related sections (the acid tests) in the proposal by the American general Keith Dayton must be rejected."

¶2. Syrian Option:

Summary:

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Kaspit wrote in Maariv: "There are growing estimations in Jerusalem that the US, still headed by George Bush, will perform some kind of military attack on nuclear sites in Iran. Such an aerial strike will cause a crazy Iranian reaction, including firing missiles on Gulf countries, including Israel.... If this happens this summer, it's highly dangerous. If it happens next summer while Israel is in serious negotiations with Syria, it can be a totally different picture."

Block Quotes:

"A Totally Different Picture"

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Kaspit wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (05/25): "Olmert knows that only a diplomatic move can help him survive. A real move. In the past few months he conducted discrete in-depth examination of the Syrian track. According to people close to him he has come to acknowledge that Israel will have no choice but to sit and open negotiations with Bashar Assad. The collapse of the diplomatic dialogue with the Palestinians, the breakdown of Fatah in Gaza, the fall of the Gaza Strip into the hands of Hamas and the empty talks with Abu Mazen strengthen this decision. The Americans withdraw their objection. The security establishment supports and is united.... It is time to decide.... whether we are ready to give up the Golan Heights in exchange for peace with Syria that would lead to the breaking of the axis of evil Teheran-Damascus-Beirut.... There are growing estimations in Jerusalem that the US, still headed by George Bush, will perform some kind of military attack on nuclear sites in Iran. Such an aerial strike will cause a crazy Iranian reaction, including firing missiles on Gulf countries, including Israel.... If this happens this summer, it's highly dangerous. If it happens next summer while Israel is in serious negotiations with Syria, it can be a totally different picture."

JONES